

ASSESSING THE NOVA SCOTIA RESTORATIVE JUSTICE INITIATIVE

THE RESEARCH DESIGN REPORT: A LOGIC MODEL APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

This report is divided into three sections. Part A places the Nova Scotia restorative justice initiative in theoretical and policy perspective by reproducing a paper the author has recently published. Its theme, "restorative justice: from the margins into the mainstream", appears to capture well the anticipated 'value-added' associated with this enhancement of alternative measures. The projected singularity of the initiative is highlighted and detailed since this will be the focus of the evaluation. The research/evaluation design must be judged in terms of whether it can effectively describe, measure and assess the hypothesized 'value-added' contribution and whether, through comparisons and utilizing a variety of methodologies, it can appreciably contribute to the on-going monitoring of the initiative and inform with respect to its overall significance for contemporary justice issues.

This research design report, Part B which appended here, provides the framework for evaluation. Here the evaluation objectives are specified and the major tasks and methods laid out. Clearly the evaluation must provide a good description of the initiative's activities, determine the appropriateness of the implementation, and assess the outcomes; in particular, as noted there, outcomes have to be assessed in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. In the first two years the restorative justice programs will be directed solely at young offenders. It is expected that there will be significant impact on offenders, victims, the community, and the criminal justice system. Major evaluation tasks, beyond interviews and observations, include assisting in the putting into place of appropriate data retrieval systems and laying the bases for comparisons over time among participating regions, with non-participating regions and with the regular court processing system. In later phases of the initiative more attention has to be directed to long-term impact, whether on offenders, victims, the agencies or the criminal justice system itself. In general, the evaluation is seen as a formative evaluation, that is, an evaluation featuring close collaboration with the agencies and the initiative's steering committee in developing the instruments and strategies for evaluation and in feedback and exchange of information. The major areas or modules for evaluation have been identified as the police entry level (formal cautions and restorative justice referrals), agency implementation, interviewing participants of agency-directed restorative justice programs, the criminal justice system (entry levels two, three and four), the community and the public at large, recidivism and pro-social outcomes, and cost-

benefit analyses. These modules are always under consideration but their centrality for the evaluation varies over the four year period (see Work Plan Timetable below).

The major way that this research design has been constructed and operationalized has been through the formulation of "a logic model" approach. The Nova Scotia initiative was not advanced with a logic model format but its multiple objectives were clearly stated and the pertinent causal linkages to restorative justice programming were generally articulated in various documentation. All logic models connect intended outcomes (i.e., objectives) to causal factors and linkages, and their implementation requirements. Such models incorporate the measures to be obtained, standards to assess the significance of the results, and specification of ways (and responsibilities for) the measures will be obtained. In this section of the research design report, first a general logic model for assessing change is laid out, followed by a general logic model for assessing restorative justice change, and finally, specific logic models are formulated for each of the five principal objectives of the Nova Scotia initiative. For each of the objectives (e.g. reducing recidivism), there is a three by four matrix where the three dimensions of intended outcomes, causal factors and linkages, and implementation factors are each specified in terms of four considerations, namely the multiple outcomes or factors advanced, the measures for the outcomes or factors, the standards to assess the significance of change, and the ways the measures will be obtained. An earlier version of this logic model (i.e., submitted as part of the evaluation proposal) was presented to and discussed with the N.S. Restorative Justice coordinators and with the directors of the carrier agencies. These discussions led to several modifications including a more explicit inclusion of the continuing implementation responsibilities of the N.S. Department of Justice in the areas of data management, training and other 'infra-structure' support resources, and dissemination of information within the criminal justice system and to the public at large. Such discussions, along with a more intensive and focussed literature review, also led to the inclusion of new measures (e.g., offender and victim 'responsivity' to the restorative justice option) and to the further specification of data collection strategies (e.g. panel studies for assessing public impact)

Not appended here is Part C of this research design report, "preparing for the evaluation", deals with the activities and design re-specifications that have taken place as a result of

discussing the proposed evaluation with the stakeholders, and the evaluation team's in-depth examination of pertinent literature. It is divided into two subsections, namely "forging an acceptable research evaluation design" and "three major current evaluation foci". In discussing the former, reference is made to the seven distinct groupings or categories of interest consulted on evaluation design issues and the main outcomes of those consultations. The seven are the coordinators and staff directing the restorative justice initiative at the N.S. Department of Justice, the directors of the four participating regional service agencies who are responsible for delivering the restorative justice programming, the police, both municipal and R.C.M.P., the Department of Justice's information technology staff who are developing the internet information system for this program (in collaboration with the agencies and the initiative's coordinators and support staff), the management of the alternative measures program in the 'control' or non-participating region, N.S. Victims Services, and N.S. Correctional Services. These consultations have been very valuable in the development of the evaluation design and all the parties were positive and helpful in passing along relevant materials, suggesting evaluation strategies and facilitating access for the evaluation team; these consultations have been a very positive experience for the evaluators.

In the subsection dealing with major current evaluation foci, attention is paid to the issues of overall project-level evaluation, the chief comparisons that are to be drawn, and the preparation of research evaluation instruments. The chief point in respect to overall project evaluation is that the evaluation must always keep the larger picture under consideration. This requires looking at the project as a whole from the adequacy of the protocols for referrals, through the feasibility and implementation of the restorative justice ideas, to the ultimate questions of whether the program is effective, efficient and equitable and whether restorative justice delivers on its promise. In this section too, there is a discussion of the major types of comparison that will be drawn in order to assess the significance of the initiative. The major comparisons are those dealing with the contrast of restorative justice and alternative measures programming, the rural-urban distinction among the participating regional agencies, the evolution of the agency programs over time, and, of course, between the restorative justice and the court processing options. Other interesting comparisons are also noted. Finally, there is a discussion of the development of the specific research instruments to be used in this evaluation.

Referral forms have already been developed for cautioning and restorative justice and are included as an appendix to this report. They contain useful socio-demographic and offence data as well as assessments of the appropriateness of the case for restorative justice or not; comparisons can be made then between cases and offenders cautioned or referred to restorative justice, and cases and offenders kept in the court stream. Beyond these instruments, there is a need to develop measures to get at issues such as offender and victim risks/needs, responsibility to restorative justice, and satisfaction with the way their incident was handled (whether via restorative justice or court). Such measures, and many others, are detailed especially for the three phases, namely pre-session, session and follow-up to session.

**COMPONENTS OF
A LOGIC MODEL**

A	B	C
1. Intended Outcomes	Casual Factors and Linkages	Implementation Factors
2. Measures for Outcomes	Measures for Casual Factors	Measures for Implementation Factors
3. Standards	Standards	Standards
4. Ways Measures Will Be Obtained	Ways Measures Will Be Obtained	Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

**A LOGIC MODEL FOR
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CHANGE**

1. Intended Outcomes

1. Less recidivism of offenders
2. More victim satisfaction
3. Greater public confidence in the Criminal Justice System (CJS)
4. Strengthened communities
5. Favourable cost-benefit

2. Measures for Outcomes

See following charts

3. Standards

See following charts

4. Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

See following charts

Casual Factors and Linkages

1. Expanding scope of current alternative sentencing to include more serious offences and offenders
2. Expanding the alternative approaches with new practices
3. Obtaining referrals from all four 'entry points' of the Criminal Justice System
4. Securing an appropriate number of cases
5. Involving the victim and the community on a more consistent basis
6. Competent facilitators effecting positive interpersonal dynamics and appropriate dispositions in the referred cases
7. Effective and efficient mobilization of services and resources in the community

Measures for Casual Factors

See following charts

Standards

See following charts

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

See following charts

Implementation Factors

1. Effective protocols for referrals
2. Referral agencies' organizational adequacy in terms of operational strategies, personnel, training and other resource needs
3. Implementing Restorative Justice practices, such as conferencing and circle sentencing, fully and appropriately
4. Monitoring and evaluating process and outcome results
5. Effective coordination by the Nova Scotia Department of Justice with respect to data management, collaboration with CJS officials, public information about the program, and supporting the agencies in terms of infrastructure and training requirements

Measures for Implementation Factors

See following charts

Standards

See following charts

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

See following charts

1. Intended Outcomes

- 1. Compliance with disposition
- 2. Less recidivism among young offenders
- 3. Less reliance on custodial sentences
- 4. Less crime among youth

Casual Factors and Linkages

- 1. In-depth information on and response to offenders
- 2. Serious crimes and offenders are dealt with
- 3. The restorative justice practice or program is appropriately carried out
- 4. The case dispositions are appropriate to the offenders' reintegration and non-recidivism
- 5. The offender participates appropriately in the restorative justice and complies with the disposition

Implementation Factors

- 1. Agencies have the capacity to effect the restorative justice (e.g. trained personnel, staff, awareness of community services)
- 2. Serious cases are secured in sufficient quantity
- 3. Links are drawn among risks/needs, restorative justice processes and outcomes, and other helpful sources
- 4. The restorative justice program is implemented as intended (e.g. victim and community member present)

2. Measures for Outcomes

- 1. Rates of recidivism for different offences
- 2. Length of custody sentences and of time served
- 3. Self-reported crime as well as official records
- 4. Correlates of recidivism and positive behaviours (e.g. school attendance, employment)
- 5. Compliance of offenders with their case dispositions

Measures for Casual Factors

- 1. Agency contact (amount and quality) with offenders
- 2. Implementation adequacy of the restorative justice session (e.g. supporters present)
- 3. Compliance with disposition
- 4. Offenders' needs and risks and "responsivity" to restorative justice
- 5. Offenders' attitudes and views on the restorative justice experience, justice system, etc.
- 6. Views and attitudes of support persons involved in the sessions

Measures for Implementation Factors

- 1. Agency capacity (e.g. training, staff)
- 2. Parameters of the restorative justice session (e.g. how close to the ideal in composition and dynamics)
- 3. Penetration rate of eligible cases for the different levels of offences
- 4. Services and other community resources utilized

3. Standards

- 1. Comparisons over time
- 2. Comparisons with non-referral cases controlling for variables such as risks/needs and type of offence

Standards

- 1. Comparison of restorative justice and regular criminal justice experience
- 2. Comparison with Alternative Measures (AMs) programs, and across participating regions
- 3. Monitor over time

Standards

- 1. Monitoring over time
- 2. Comparisons across the regions and with AMs and regular court system

4. Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

- 1. Agencies provide data on compliance
- 2. Charge and sentencing data obtained and analyzed by the Evaluation Team from official sources

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

- 1. Agencies collect data on contracts with offenders, risks and needs factors, the implemented program, disposition of cases and compliance
- 2. Agencies collect 'exit' data from offenders, supporters, etc.
- 3. Evaluation Team collects data on offenders and others through follow-up interviews
- 4. Evaluation Team does analyses and comparisons

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

- 1. Agency provides data on training, staff availability, and specifics of the restorative justice session
- 2. Evaluation Team leads in developing appropriate instruments for risk/needs, "responsivity", etc.
- 3. Evaluation Team secures occurrence data and examines the use of community programs and services
- 4. Evaluation Team analyzes data and does the comparisons

1. Intended Outcomes

- 1. More victim satisfaction with the Criminal Justice System
- 2. Victim satisfaction with the Restorative Justice processes and outcomes

Casual Factors and Linkages

- 1. Victims having the opportunity to discuss what happened
- 2. More victim participation in the handling of the offence and its reparation
- 3. More care and sensitivity shown in the Justice response to victims
- 4. Needs of victims are acknowledged in processes and outcomes

Implementation Factors

- 1. Agencies enhance their orientation to and contact with victims
- 2. Agencies have the training and resources to relate to victims and their concerns
- 3. Different agency approaches to organizing their services to victims are implemented
- 4. Agencies have greater information on victims needs and “responsivity” to restorative justice
- 5. Nova Scotia Department of Justice coordinates appropriate agency training and contacts

2. Measures for Outcomes

- 1. ‘Exit’ responses
- 2. Follow-up survey or interview
- 3. Measures of perceptions, attitudes and needs

Measures for Casual Factors

- 1. Agency contacts with victims
- 2. Victims needs, “responsivity”, attendance and quality of participation
- 3. Victim notification of processes and outcome, including compliance
- 4. The dispositions rendered in the case

Measures for Implementation Factors

- 1. Agencies’ activities in training staff and facilitators
- 2. Staff and facilitators’ perceptions and views about their training, victims and so on
- 3. Monitoring the compliance
- 4. Agency contacts (number and quality) with victims
- 5. Linking victims to community services where appropriate

3. Standards

- 1. Comparisons with victim responses in non-participating agencies
- 2. Comparisons with victims' responses in non-referred cases
- 3. Victims' own comparative experiences
- 4. Improvement over time in satisfying victims and meeting their concerns and needs

4. Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

- 1. Instruments for 'exit' and follow-ups developed by Evaluation Team
- 2. Agencies to be responsible for collecting 'needs' and 'exit' data
- 3. Evaluation Team collects data via follow-up surveys and in-depth interviews
- 4. Evaluation Team analyses and compares as in Standards

Standards

- 1. Comparisons as in Outcomes column
- 2. Comparisons for participation and victim-salient disposition with non-referred cases and AMs cases
- 3. Monitor progress over time

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

- 1. Agencies obtain data on contacts, participation and dispositions
- 2. Evaluation Team gathers data by surveys and in-depth interviews
- 3. Evaluation Team analyzes and compares as in Standards

Standards

- 1. Comparisons with AMs and non-referred cases
- 2. Monitoring over time
- 3. Inter-agency comparisons, especially of different operational strategies for relating to victims

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

- 1. Agency provides data on contacts and operational strategies
- 2. Agency provides data on training and on community resources networked for victims
- 3. Evaluation Team does analyses and comparisons
- 4. Evaluation Team interviews agency, staff, volunteers, victims and offenders
- 5. Evaluation Team monitors response of public influentials through panel studies

**A LOGIC MODEL FOR ASSESSING
THE “INCREASING PUBLIC
CONFIDENCE IN CJS” OBJECTIVE**

1. Intended Outcomes

1. More public confidence in CJS
2. Greater sense that CJS is effective, efficient and equitable in its operations

2. Measures for Outcomes

1. Views and perceptions of public opinion influentials, and interest group leaders
2. Views and perceptions of the Restorative Justice participants, agencies’ personnel, consultation committee members, and CJS officials
3. Identifying causes of any change indicated
4. Content analyses of media reports

Casual Factors and Linkages

1. Restorative Justice is effectively implemented
2. Favourable cost-benefit ratios can be advanced
3. The case can be made for greater victim satisfaction, and less recidivism and more pro-social behaviour by offenders
4. Information is effectively communicated to CJS officials and the public opinion influentials

Measures for Casual Factors

1. Information gathered on communication strategies and networking
2. Salient data for RJ sessions, victims and offenders are gathered
3. Process and impact indicators for communication effectiveness are developed

Implementation Factors

1. Agencies develop effective communication and networking strategies
2. Monitoring of RJ effectiveness, costs-benefits, and process and impact indicators of public confidence
3. Enhancement of AMs approaches for relating to the community and to the public at large
4. Effective coordination by the Nova Scotia Department of Justice in communicating restorative justice experiences and successes within the criminal justice system and to the public at large

Measures for Implementation Factors

1. Agencies’ resources and operating strategies are examined
2. The adequacy of monitoring is assessed
3. There is examination of changes over the AMS style and activity

3. Standards

1. Comparisons across regions and between participating agencies and others
2. Retrospective assessments by victims, public opinion influentials and CJS officials

Standards

1. Comparisons are made across regions and with non-participating areas
2. Process and Impact standards to be developed

Standards

1. Comparisons among regional agencies and with non-participating regions
2. Comparisons with the previous AMs approach
3. Expect improvements over time

4. Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

1. Agencies gather 'exit' data, provide information on their communications activity, and experience with CJS officials and public influentials
2. Evaluation Team collects information through interviews with all parties identified above, does the content analyses, and other analyses and comparisons

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

1. Agencies provide information on communication strategies and networking with CJS officials and public influentials
2. Agencies provide data on effective RJ implementation, certain costs-benefits, and some offender and victim issues
3. Evaluation Team does interviews, analyzes organizational activities, and makes all comparisons

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

1. Agencies provide data on monitoring capability and effectiveness and on communication efforts
2. Evaluation Team does organization analyses and does other analyses and all comparisons
3. Nova Scotia Department of Justice activities in publicizing restorative justice and the actions of its steering committee for the program

**A LOGIC MODEL FOR THE
“STRENGTHENING
COMMUNITIES” OBJECTIVE**

1. Intended Outcomes

1. More community participation in dealing with justice matters
2. More mobilization of community resources
3. Less fear and insecurity in the community
4. More community focus on, and capability with respect to, crime prevention and social development

2. Measures for Outcomes

1. Amount and quality of community involvement in RJ practices
2. Utilization and enhancement of community resources
3. Examining by-products relevant to crime prevention and social development
4. Explore appropriate indicators of fear, security and community strength.

Casual Factors and Linkages

1. Effective implementation of RJ with significant community involvement
2. Less recidivism and more victim satisfaction
3. Community mobilization via informational sessions, brochures, etc.
4. More effective networking and liaison among community groups to harness their resources and capabilities

Measures for Casual Factors

1. Participation of community members in RJ practices
2. Contacts of agencies with community organizations and communications strategies
3. Referrals to, and other linkages (e.g. reparation) established with, community services and organizations
4. Comparable data for regions and for AMs era

Implementation Factors

1. Agencies emphasize and implement community involvement with RJ practices
2. RJ practices are well carried out and match best RJ standards
3. RJ programs deliver on their claims
4. Effective, appropriate linkages are made between offender and victim needs, and community services and resources
5. Dispositions are appropriate and effectively monitored

Measures for Implementation Factors

1. Organizational adequacy in involving the community
2. Extent to which RJ effectiveness is linked to community
3. Types and quality/quantity of community links (e.g. community service disposition, dealing with offender needs, etc.)

3. Standards

1. Comparisons across regions and with non-participating regions
2. Compare community involvement in RJ sessions and in being mobilized to meet offender and victim needs, in the above regions, and also with previous AMs experience of the agencies
3. Obtain views and perceptions of agency personnel, CJS officials and public influentials

4. Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

1. Agencies provide data on their community involvement and linkages
2. Agencies provide data on their present and past practices
3. A panel of policy influentials in the four regions will be regularly contacted
4. Evaluation Team gathers data from community services and does analyses and comparisons

Standards

1. Comparisons across regions, with non-participating regions and with AMs era
2. Extent to which new community resources have emerged and/or resources better utilized
3. Expect positive changes over time

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

1. Agencies provide information on community participation, community links and community resources mobilized
2. Evaluation Team does analyses and comparisons
3. Evaluation Team conducts interviews, network analyses and does comparisons

Standards

1. Comparisons across regions, with non-participating regions and with AMs era
2. Expect positive changes over time

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

1. Agencies provide data on types, quantity and quality of contacts with community
2. Evaluation Team does interviews, analyses and comparisons

**A LOGIC MODEL FOR THE
“COSTS-BENEFITS” OBJECTIVE**

1. Intended Outcomes

1. Less cost in dealing with young offenders (e.g. courts, corrections)
2. Better utilization of Justice resources
3. Less crime for society to deal with
4. Greater utilization of community resources
5. Direct benefits are increased reparation and restitution

2. Measures for Outcomes

1. Number and types of youth offenders directed to RJ
2. Costs savings from less formal CJS responsibility
3. Quantitative and qualitative impact on processing by courts and on corrections
4. Reparation and restitution measures
5. Youth crime data over time
6. Quantifying volunteer and community resources

Casual Factors and Linkages

1. Fewer cases being processed in court
2. Less police, prosecutorial and correctional resources spent on youth crime
3. Less recidivism and more pro-social behaviour (e.g. early intervention)
4. Use of volunteers and community services
5. Serving a significant number of cases for the RJ alternatives
6. Effective RJ practices (e.g. conferences, circle sentencing)

Measures for Casual Factors

1. Cases processed in the CJS and RJ venues are compared and ‘costed’
2. Changes in police prosecutorial, and correctional resources spent on youth crime
3. Behavioural and self-reported data on recidivism and pro-social behaviours
4. Youth crime data over time
5. Extent to which RJ practices approximated ‘best practices’

Implementation Factors

1. Protocols established and cases referred from all entry points
2. Serious cases and offenders access RJ options
3. Effective networking among Department of Justice, Nova Scotia, regional carrier agencies, and mainstream CJS officials
4. Effective selection, training and use of volunteers and staff by agencies
5. Effective implementation of RJ practices

Measures for Implementation Factors

1. Extent to which referrals are from the four entry points in adequate numbers
2. Proportion of cases that are serious crimes and involve repeat offenders
3. Contacts and networking strategies developed by the agencies
4. Number of volunteers and adequacy of their training
5. Indicators of effective implementation of RJ practices

3. Standards

1. Comparisons across regions and with non-participating regions
2. Comparison of RJ and CJS costs
3. Conceptualizing and comparing direct and indirect costs and benefits

Standards

1. Comparisons across regions and with non-participating agencies
2. Trend and expectation of positive cost-benefit ratios over time
3. Comparisons, both quantitative and qualitative, with RJ and CJS handling of youth cases

Standards

1. Comparisons across regions and with non-participating agencies
2. Trends and expectation of continuing improvement

4. Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

1. Access provincial JOIS systems for charges, costs etc, in collaboration with Department of Justice staff
2. Budgetary data obtained from agencies and Department of Justice
3. Interviews about and data on indirect costs and benefits, to be gathered by Evaluation Team

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

1. Agencies to provide data on member and type of referrals, disposition of cases, budgets and trends in all of the above cases
2. Department of Justice provides relevant budgetary information and access to JOIS and other pertinent data systems
3. Evaluation Team to conduct interviews, analyze data and make all comparisons identified above

Ways Measures Will Be Obtained

1. Agencies provide data on volunteers (numbers, training, and use) and on community services and organizations participating, whether in the disposition of cases or in the provision of services to offenders and victims
2. Evaluation Team conducts interviews with agency personnel, CJS officials, and community services
3. Evaluation Team does analyses and comparisons